

Notes from ZOOM Presentation
Membership and the Investigating Committee
November 15, 2022, 7:30PM

There were 61 participants logged in to this meeting, not counting those who had multiple people on the same device. Great!

The meeting began with Department Membership Chairman, Marcia Williams, introducing herself and explaining that Membership isn't necessarily more important than the other programs but is equally important as all the Programs work together to serve our veterans.

She gave some reasons why we join the VFW Auxiliary- to honor the service of our veteran, to promote patriotism, to increase our voice with our elected officials. Marcia also explained how to conduct a recruiting event. It is important when doing an event to speak with prospective members. Don't just hand out materials but talk about what we do, try to spark an interest in one of the programs with the prospect.

The eligibility wheel has been distributed many times. Marcia discussed it and its information. Eligibility is listed in the podium book beginning on page 5. You can look for medals, places, and dates.

Much discussion centered around being sure the application is legible and COMPLETE. She went over this form step-by-step. Once the application is complete and the investigating committee has made its recommendation and the applicant has been voted on, the documents presented as proof MUST be returned to their owner- the veteran. Do not send it with the application to the Department Treasurer. The integrity of the Auxiliary depends on the investigating committee doing its job, not on the Department Treasurer to review eligibility. Do not forget the check! The Department cannot withdraw funds from the Auxiliary account for applications sent to Kim to process. That's only possible with National and MALTA. When sending a membership to Kim, send a check to pay for it. If the applicant is paying with a credit card- (Life Memberships only) be sure to get it processed in a timely manner. National will not honor a credit card payment more than 60 days after it was dated.

The goal of the Membership Chairman is to reach 100% by December 31st. Department is currently 84.33%. This is not MISSION IMPOSSIBLE; it is MISSION POSSIBLE! She also enumerated circumstances where an Auxiliary might use its Relief Fund to help members pay their annual dues.

Department Treasurer, Kim White, explained the difference between post affiliated v nonaffiliated applicants. And always be sure the date of birth is on the application- even if it isn't a life membership. The application gets delayed because it cannot be processed without the date of birth.

Chief of Staff, Marianne McLane, then went on to discuss the investigation. This is in Section 102 of the bylaws. Although there should be three members, there must be at least two signatures from the investigating committee on the application. The Committee does not have to be the same three people every time. They must report their finding and recommendations before the Auxiliary votes. Do not forget email address if the applicant has one. This is how they will receive the National magazine and the E-Newsletter. It was suggested that Auxiliaries should have a training or short mentoring session to teach members how to read a DD-214. Copies must be kept of all applications. They are a permanent record.

There was discussion regarding other ways, besides the DD-214 to prove eligibility. An active-duty veteran will not have a DD-214. Other ways include, proof of Danger pay, travel orders, medical orders, medals, letters from a combat zone. There is also a form SF-180 which can retrieve information that might have been lost in the infamous Missouri fire. It can take a long time to get though. I did not hear where one might obtain this form, though. There was a question about cemetery markers, which in themselves do not prove eligibility, but the military markers provided by the VA do prove the VA has information about the veteran that might be made available to direct kin. Contact the VA Service Officers for more information. Active-duty applicants might also have an ORB (Officer Record Brief) or an ERB (Enlisted Record Brief). There is also a web site where information might be found:

www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/

Rules regarding eligibility of “steps” and adoptees have also changed. The age at which one becomes a “step” or adoptee is no longer a factor. Step or adopted relatives are the same as biological children, grandchildren, siblings, etc. Great grandchildren are not eligible. This is established by Congress and the IRS, not the VFW or the Auxiliary.

There is a list of “At Large” members, mainly former members of an auxiliary that has been disbanded. These members could be recruited to transfer their membership back into an Auxiliary where their talents and skills could be used in projects for the veterans. Contact Treasurer, Kim White. For more information.

ZOOM meetings will continue the 3rd Tuesday, every other month. If you have a strong preference for either 7:00 or 7:30 let Kim know. The January ZOOM topic will be The Treasurer, with featured presenter, Department Treasurer, Kim White.

Loyally,

Chris Leavor

Department of NY VFW Auxiliary Secretary